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153 773 Some of these people are able to repeat a tale lasting five or ten minutes after having heard it twice or thrice only. It is to be wondered at therefore that they have so few traditions, or rather that these traditions do not reach further back in history. In fact, when you inquire into what they know of the past, you find first, a story about their origin which bears a strongly mythical character ; secondly, traditions more or less legendary about the migrations of the various clans ; thirdly, genealogies of the royal family containing eight to ten names, and fourthly, historical narratives which go back as far as the beginning of the 19th century, and which give the impression of true historical facts. History, amongst the Thongas, begins only one hundred years ago. What took place before that is almost entirely forgotten. This fact shows that, even amongst races possessing a good memory, before the introduction of a system of writing traditions regarding the ancient past can hardly be relied upon.

A. Prehistoric Period.

773 1) *The story of man's origin* is this. The first human beings emerged from reeds. Each tribe came into this world with its present characteristics. For instance the Ba-Bvesha, who are great blacksmiths, knew how to forge their iron picks from the first day. They "came out" holding them. The Ba-Ronga group calls the first ancestors of humanity Likalahumba and Nsilambowa, viz. the one who brings a glowing cinder in a shell (the man) and the one who grinds vegetables (the woman). The Ba-Djonga call them Gwambe and Dzabana. Another story universally believed tells us how death came amongst men by the fault of the chameleon (See Part VI). All these stories are purely mythical and form part of the African Genesis which is met with in most tribes.

123 2) *Legends about the ancient migrations* of the various clans. Almost every clan pretends to have come from afar and, strange to say, they came from all the points of the compass. Two of their clans, without doubt, come from the north, the Ba-ka-

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173 Baloyi and the Tembe. The Ba-ka-Baloyi, they say, came down the valley of the Limpopo in very remote times ; they came in such numbers that they opened out a wide track as wide as a wagon road : "It is the old, old road of Gwambe, the first man on earth who emerged from the reed. So well was the road trodden that to this day the grass has not grown over it." Many Thongas pretend to have seen it, white and straight, stretching from the northern bank of the Limpopo and going southwards through the desert, just like the road over which Attila passed ! At a certain place, near a rivulet where the Ba-Loyi rested, one can still see in the rock the print of the mortars of the women. "The stones at that time were not yet hardened, and they retained the marks made by the mortars in that old expedition, the marks also of the hemp pipes of the men and of their *matshuba*." (The *matshuba* are the little holes hollowed out by the Natives in four rows, as required in their favourite game called *tshuba*. See Part II, Chap. II.)

According to some of the Native historians, the Ba-Loyi came from the Ba-Nyai country along with the Ba-Nwanati, who also belonged to the Nyai or Kalanga race. They went southwards by that wonderful old road till they reached the sea coast not far from the mouth of the Limpopo. The sight of the sea, that broad unknown river, filled them with great fear. The Ba-Loyi felt they could not remain in such a dangerous neighbourhood and advised the whole party to go back to the north. In the meantime, however, their Nwanati friends had discovered a fruit not common on the African high veld, but very common on the sandy plains of the coast. In shape it was round, about the size of an orange, with a hard outer shell. When broken it was found to contain a number of stones, each wrapped in a delicate, strongly scented pulp, of which the Natives prepare an excellent dish. This fruit is called *makwakwa*. "We shall remain here to break open our *makwakwa*" said the Ba-Nwanati, and they bade farewell to the Ba-Loyi, who started back to their present abode. Hence the name Makwakwa now given to those Nwanatis.

173 The Nwanatis included the Makwakwas of Khambane and the 773 Malulekes. These latter separated from their brethren and

returned north, to the country of the Ba-Loyi, led by their ancestor, Mashakatsi. This man, who was a great hunter, saw that he could easily defeat the Ba-Nyai who were settled in those parts, and brought back his followers with him. He became the founder of the dynasty of Maluleke. (For further details about these legends, see Addresses and Papers of the Joint Meeting of British and South African Associations for the Advancement of Science, Johannesburg 1905.)

As regards the Tembe clan, it is said to have come down as far as Delagoa Bay from the Kalanga country by the Nkomati river on a floating island of papyrus, and to have crossed the Tembe river and settled to the south of the Bay. An old saying alludes to this arrival and to the conquest of the country :

Phandje, phandje ra nala—Tembe kulu a wela.

As the palm leaf with its numerous feelers—so did the ancestor Tembe when he crossed.

He placed his sons in all the districts of the plain to govern in his name. The Tembe people, when they greet each other, sometimes use the salutation Nkalanga, i. e. man of the north or of the Kalanga country, and there is little doubt that, notwithstanding the legendary traits in this tradition, the fact itself of the northern origin of these clans is true. In the course of time the chiefs of Matutwen and Maputju, descendants of Tembe, became independent.

Most of the other clans point to Zululand or to Swaziland as having been their first abode, which they left to invade the low country of the coast. Mpfumu and Matjolo are both sons of Nhlaruti, who is said to have been the first invader ; from him sprang their two clans which have become independent of and even hostile to each other. The Nondwane families point to the neighbourhood of Komati Port as being the place from which they came. There were successive invasions of a peaceful character. These people still turn the face of their dead to the west, because the clan came from the Lebombo hills, and this rite proves that the tradition is well founded. The Nkuna, Khosa, and Hlabi clans also claim the same western or south-western origin. Amongst the Ba-Nkuna, some old men say they know

173 the precise place in Zululand whence their forefather Nkuna started and declare that they still have relatives there.

The Hlanganus and Hlengwes seem to have no tradition of 173 this kind. The only one I heard about the Hlengwes is this. 372 Tshauke, their first king, took as his wife the daughter of another chief belonging to the Sono tribe. The Sonos knew how to cook 773 their food, the Hlengwes did not: they were still ignorant of fire and used to eat their porridge raw. The son of Tshauke stole a glowing cinder from the Sonos and brought it home in a big shell. The Sonos were angry and declared war on the Hlengwes; but these latter, having gained new strength because they had been eating cooked food, won the victory. The son of Tshauke was then named Shioki-sha-humba - he who brings fire in a shell. This tradition is connected with the name of the first man, Likala-humba, which we have just explained, and it evidently bears a legendary character.

A similar story is told about the Shiburi clan (between the Olifant and Nkomati rivers). The old inhabitants of that country were the Masilanes and Nshongos. Once, at a very remote period, a man of the Shiburi clan, who was a Pedi and dwelt in Mabulanen, at the foot of the Drakensberg Mountains, pursued an eland which he had wounded and killed it in the territory of the Masilanes. He returned home to call his countrymen to cut it in pieces and to eat it according to the custom of hunters. These people then roasted the meat and handed over some of it to the Masilanes. The Masilanes used to eat meat raw as they did not know the use of fire. They found that cooked meat was much better than raw meat and told the Shiburis: "You are more intelligent than we are; we will serve you henceforth!" They therefore decided to get rid of their own chief. The Shiburis lighted a big fire, dug a hole and put the glowing embers into it. Then a mat was spread over the mouth of the hole and the chief was asked to sit upon it. He fell into the pit and died, and the Shiburis became the masters of the country. They abandoned their costume (the musubelo, viz. the piece of skin fastened between the legs as used by the Pedis) their language and their marriage laws, married Masilane girls and became true Thongas (Mabuyandlela).

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APPENDIX V (See p. 226)

593 858 177 797 As an example of *the absolute obedience due to the father*, I may quote the testimony of the Rev. Calvin Maphophe, one of the Native ministers of the Swiss Mission, now living in Lourenço Marques. It illustrates vividly the painful conflict which takes place in the heart of a Bantu boy when he is faced with the dilemma of either obeying a heathen father who forbids him to become a Christian, or going against the paternal will and joining the Church.

One day one of the little shepherds belonging to Maphophe's village in the Spelonken brought to his comrades an astonishing piece of news. He had gone to the missionary station and heard a white man say that there is a God in heaven and that this God created all things. His words were received with absolute incredulity by the company of [773] boys herding the goats ; they answered : "It is an impossibility! Do we not know that the first man and woman came out of a reed ?" However young Matsivi (this was the name of Calvin Maphophe) and his brother Shihosi wished to set their minds at rest about the matter and they began to attend the service on Sundays. They were so struck by the message heard in the little church that they decided to learn more of this extraordinary teaching of the White people, and every Sunday they went to the Station. One of the men of the tribe informed their father that they were assiduous attendants at the Christian services. Maphophe called together all the men of his village and summoned the two boys before this tribunal. Pointing his finger at them he said : "These boys have dared to go to the White people and hear things which are dangerous to us. We do not wish them to become insane! Take it to heart both of you. It is over. Henceforth you must never go again to the village of the Whites. If you disobey, you will be beaten."

The two boys were terribly moved by their father's words. It is a recognised principle in the Bantu tribe that a child who wishes to do right must obey his father, and they were anxious to behave well... But the attraction they felt for the new teaching was too great. They solved the problem by running away from their home. This is not the place to tell the end of the story. It may be found in a little pamphlet "Le Pasteur Calvin Mapopé" published by the headquarters of the Swiss Romande Mission (2, Chemin des Cèdres, Lausanne).

539 For texts of folktales, see category 116, pp. 226-275.
773

000 In the first chapter, I shall try to record the ideas of the Thongas on Nature and Man ; this is what might be called their *Natural Philosophy*, if the term were not somewhat pretentious. In the second, their distinctively *religious notions and rites* will be explained. In the third I shall describe the manifold manifestations of their *Magic*, in which I include the Practice of Medicine, Witchcraft, Possession and Divination. In the fourth, the question of *Morality and Taboo* will be considered.

CHAPTER I

Conceptions of the Thongas regarding Nature and Man.

A. CONCEPTIONS REGARDING NATURE.

I. *Origin of the World.*

773 "What is it that created Heaven and Earth? — Nature!" This proverb or riddle, already quoted (p. 180), is perhaps the only answer given by the Thongas to the problem of creation. *Ntumbuluko*, the word I translate by Nature, comes from *ku tumbuluka*, to happen, to be formed. It does not convey any clear idea of a Creation. The sense of causality is very little developed amongst most of the Thongas. So they are contented with this rather pantheistic notion, beyond which many very educated scientists of our age will not go, that Nature created the world, and they do not search further. Some say that the originator of Heaven and Earth is Rivimbi, or Kudjwana, or Ñwari. The first two of these names are the Venda or Pedi names of the first human beings ; Ñwali or Myali is a god of the Ba-Nyai whose legend has spread amongst the Northern clans of the Thongas, especially the Hlengwes and the Malulekes. It is possible that the tribes from which these names have been borrowed, truly believe these personages to have created the world. In

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the story of Ñwali, for instance, it is said that, when he lived, 773
stones were not yet hard, and so the implements of the first men left their impression on the rocks (Comp. I. p. 22). But they are in the first place the *creators of mankind*, as we shall notice.

I believe that the *origin of man* preoccupies the Bantu mind much more than the origin of the world as a whole. They can live their whole life without being troubled by this question, which has perplexed so many hearts in other lands. Only a few particularly serious spirits, the religious geniuses of the tribe, search eagerly for light on this subject. I have met with one of these. His name was Rangane, and he came from the Maluleke district. When quite a young boy he often asked his mother who it was who had made heaven and earth. She told him : "It is Khudjwana, but he died long ago. Even the place where he was buried is unknown." This did not satisfy the curiosity of the child : so she sent him to the old men to question them. They answered by the myth of the reed which we shall explain later on, saying : "All men came from a reed." This also failed to satisfy the thirst of this inquiring soul, desirous of knowing whence everything proceeds, and he told me how gladly surprised he was when, having come to Pretoria for work, he heard a convert say that God had created everything and teaching the Christian explanation of the world. I remember that his face beamed with joy when he told his story. But such earnest, philosophical natures are very rare amongst Natives, and Rangane was an exception. He died when still at the beginning of his course of study ; and he was vastly superior to most of his comrades as regards religious perception.

II. *The celestial world.*

(Thonga astronomy).

If Thongas do not bother much about the origin of heaven, and 772
of its lights, what are their ideas concerning them?

Heaven (tilo, dji-ma) is for them an immense solid vault which rests on the earth. The point where heaven touches the earth

823 Transvaal at Komati Poort (a place known to all), was the same as
815 the Nkomati which enters the sea near Morakwen, northwards of Lourenço Marques, at a distance of 60 miles from Komati Poort. It must be said, in excuse for them, that in Morakwen the river is called Morako (locative Morakwen) and thus many people have never been aware of the identity of the two!

If you wish to impress Natives greatly with your knowledge, tell them the names of all the countries of Thongaland in their geographical order, as you may have learnt them in conversation, or by studying the map. They will be amazed, and say : "What a wonderful traveller you are, knowing so many spots so far distant from each other!" The teaching of Geography in the schools tends, of course, to alter this state of things.

3) Earthquakes and Rainbows.

823 Earthquakes are not frequent in this part of the world ; so they are rarely spoken of. Thongas have, however, a name for them, *shimbeti*. They do not give any explanation of them and believe that they are perhaps caused by the gods. I remember having once heard a mysterious sound accompanied by a slight tremor of the soil. It was during the Boer war and was, I think, caused by the blowing up of a bridge somewhere on the other side of the range. All the Natives covered their heads with their hands and seemed greatly impressed.

821 The *rainbow* is called *shikwangulatilo*, viz., the one which
778 removes the danger from the sky. Notice the stem *kwangula*, to inaugurate, which we have already met with, when dealing with pottery (p. 117). The sky after rain is compared to a new pot, from which the *nkangu* must be removed. But this is merely an expression. No one can say what the danger is that is thus removed ; it is probable that the tribe had more precise ideas on the subject in former times, and that these have become obsolete. In some of the northern clans (Nkhabelane, Mathiye, Shiburi, Mongwe) the rainbow is called the Bow of Nyandziyo. Nyandziyo is said to be a man of the olden times who made the

rainbow ; he dwells in heaven and the rainbow is his bow. He it is who taught men the use of the bow. 773 821

The two great phenomena which mostly impress South Africans are lightning and rain, and of these you hear wonderful and endless stories!

4) Lightning.

This is called *lihati* (li-tin), and is said to be caused by a bird called *ndlati* (yi-tin). These two words, etymologically speaking, seem to be related to each other. They possess the feminine suffix *ti* which is met with in the forms *eti, ati, oti*. This bird is also called *nkuku wa tilo* amongst the Ba-Ronga, the cock of heaven, or *psele dja tilo*, the hen of heaven, and magicians know how to determine its sex when the bird has fallen. 821 825

The thunder is attributed either to the bird itself or, more frequently, to Heaven. The proper expression for "It thunders" is : "Tilo dji djuma" — "Heaven roars."

In the Northern clans those who practise magical arts add many other particulars to the story, some of which may have been borrowed from the Pedi magicians, who seem to possess a more complete explanation of the phenomenon. According to them, the *ndlati* (Pedi, *dali*) is a bird of four colours, green, red, black and white, which lives in the mountains, by preference at the confluence of rivers. The medicine-men of former times knew its hiding place and had even found the eggs of the bird in a nest floating on the water. When a thunderstorm breaks, the bird flies to heaven into the clouds ; there may be scores of them, but one only will be dangerous (lebya) and cause death. It rushes down to the ground, striking a tree on its way, tearing its bark and its wood, and throwing it down ; or it falls on a hut and burns it, or on a man and kills him. Having reached the soil, the bird can be caught, and I heard people seriously assert that four of these birds, unable to fly away, had been found the previous year in Sikororo country. Or the bird enters the ground, to a depth of two to three feet, and either remains there in its own form, or (this is the most common saying) deposits its urine (murundju), 821 825 795

825 They come up to him and wonder how he got there. By this rite
777 he has prevented the misfortune which the antelope would have caused to the travellers."

B. CONCEPTIONS REGARDING MAN.

I. *The origin of man.*

773 While the Thonga mind is very little puzzled by the question of the creation of heaven and earth, the origin of man preoccupies it more deeply. I must now enter into some details as to the story of human origin which has been already mentioned (I. p. 21). It contains two parts : the creation of man and the cause of death.

1) The creation of man.

The first human beings came out of the *lihlanga*, the reed, as some say, or the *nhlanga*, the marsh of reeds, according to others. These two versions seem to answer to two different conceptions. The first is that one man and one woman suddenly came out of one reed, which exploded (baleka), and there they were! According to the second, men of different tribes emerged from a marsh of reeds, each tribe already having its peculiar costume, implements and customs. So when you ask about the origin of the iron hoe amongst the Vendas, who possessed it before the Thongas, you will be told : "The Vendas emerged from the marsh of reeds holding them" (1).

The first man and woman are called in the Northern clans

177 (1) I believe the first version to be the true Thonga one. It may be that the idea that all races came out of the marsh of reeds is an alteration of the primitive conception under Nyai influence. The Ba-Nyai say that all men emerged from a big hole, the hole of Myali or Nwari, in the earth, at a time when stones and rocks were still so soft that foot-prints remained marked on them. It has been supposed that the myth of the reed is simply an allusion to a physiological phenomenon, but I do not believe this.

Gwambe and Dzabana. No special story is told of these ancestors of mankind, but their names are still used under certain circumstances. When expelling a disease, in the *hondlola* rite, the medicine man says: "Go away to Gwambe and Dzabana," an expression used concurrently with this: "Go away to Shiburi and Nkhabelane," viz., to the extremity of the land, a long way off; again, when many tales have been told and folks are going to sleep, these tales are also sent away back to Gwambe and Dzabana (p. 212). Why? Perhaps because they are the old, old people, and the tales which are so ancient belong to them! At any rate, by this kind of incantation story-tellers aim at preventing the hearers' sleep from being disturbed by the remembrance of the marvellous things they have been told. In the legends relating to old migrations the "Road of Gwambe" (1) is mentioned. When the ancient peoples passed along it, the earth was not yet solid, so they left the print of their feet, of their mortars, etc., in the rocks, where they are still to be seen on the edge of a river called Hlantsa-buhlalu. (Nyai idea? I. p. 22.)

In the Ronga clans, these two ancestors of mankind are called *Likalahumba* and *Nsilambowa*. The first name means: the one who brought a glowing cinder in a shell, viz., the originator of fire, (Compare the Hlengwe tradition, I. p. 24). Nsilambowa, the name of the woman, means the one who grinds vegetables. The first human beings, according to these names, were those who

(1) What is the connection between this *Gwambe* and the name of *Ma-Gwamba* commonly given to the Thongas of Spelonken (I. p. 19)? It is difficult to say. According to some, there is still a clan descended from Gwambe, the first man, whose chief calls himself Gwambe. The Ba-Venda, when they saw the Thonga merchants bringing their goods from Delagoa Bay or Inhambane, called them Makwapa, Balungwana ba Kwapen, the little White people from Kwapa or Gwamba country, viz., those who bring clothes, beads bought from the Whites. It seems certain that there exists a Gwamba clan somewhere in Gazaland, not far from the Chopi border. A story is told of this Gwamba chief, who sent messengers to Modjadji to obtain rain from her. On their return they refused to cooperate in gathering fuel for their fire and died on the road, where their graves are still to be seen. Other informants give a totally different version of the origin of the term Ma-Gwamba: Gwambe was a chief dwelling on the banks of the Olifhant, near the Dunduli villages; his men, while on a journey, said to the Vendas: "We people of Gwambe even accept old women," viz., if they receive us well, we call them our wives to please them! Hence the name they were given. Still other explanations might be found and I think there is no real connection between Gwambe, the first man, and the Ma-Gwamba.

773 825 introduced fire and the culinary art into the world! This idea is interesting and seems to show that, to the Native mind, the cooking of food is the pursuit which differentiates man from the animals.

177 773 In the clans of Maluleke and Spelonken there is a third tradition relating to the first man, but it has certainly been borrowed from the Venda or Pedi tribes. They say the first man was *Rivimbi* and his son *Khudjana* (name transformed into Hobyana according to Thonga phonetics). The Thongas only say that Hobyana is the creator of Heaven and Earth and the first ancestor of the race. But the Vendas and Pedis have a number of traditions about these two heroes (1).

2) The cause of death.

773 825 761 When the first human beings emerged from the marsh of reeds, the chief of this marsh sent the Chameleon (Lumpfana) to them, with this message: "Men will die, but they will rise again." The Chameleon started walking slowly, according to his habit. Then the big lizard with the blue head, the Galagala, was sent to tell men: "You shall die and rot." Galagala started with his swift gait and soon passed Lumpfana. He delivered his message, and when Lumpfana arrived with his errand, men said to him: "You are too late. We have already

773 776 177 (1) Here is one of the most curious of these traditions, a strange story indeed, when we reflect that these two personages are the great gods who created the universe! Once, in olden times, Khudjana planted a big pole in the earth, and passed spokes through it, right to the top. Rivimbi having climbed up, Khudjana took out the lower spokes and went home. His father being unable to get down, the son stole the food prepared for him and ate it at his ease. Then he again put the spokes in their places and the old man came home. But when he wished to have his meal, he found that nothing was left. His wife then gave him Khudjana's portion!

There is great confusion amongst these traditions. According to Mankhelu this Rivimbi, or Luvimbi, is the same as the great rain-maker to whose descendants he went to obtain the rain medicine (p. 320). He is not only the creator of the earth, but the protector of all men, who are his sons. So, if some one wishes to harm a man who is not guilty, the Vendas say to him: "Do not kill Luvimbi's man." If you steal a partridge caught in a trap which was not set by you, they say: "Luvimbi, who stands on that tree, sees you." He would seem to be a superior being, a god (shikwembu), even the chief of gods, endowed with omnipresence and omniscience. Moreover there is a relation between Rivimbi and Nwali, the Ba-Nyai god, who is represented either as father or son of Rivimbi, or identical with him. It may be that the Rivimbi tradition, which is both Pedi and Venda and seems to refer definitely to a first ancestor who has become the great god, has been mixed with the Nwali tradition, which is Nyai, so that ideas of different origins have been intermingled.

accepted another message." That is why men are subject to death. 773 825

This myth is so strongly believed that shepherds, when they see a chameleon climbing slowly up a tree, begin to tease it, and, when it opens its mouth, throw a pinch of tobacco into it, and are greatly amused to see the poor thing change colour, passing from green to orange, and from orange to black, in agony, to the great delight of the little boys ; they thus avenge themselves on the chameleon! (p. 339). 761

The same story[1] is told amongst the Zulus, and other myths of a similar character are found all over Africa, especially amongst the Ba-Rotsi (1). It would be an interesting study to collect them all, and thus to compile the African Genesis. We should probably find that the origin of man and death are the two great subjects on which the imagination of the Bantus has tried to throw some light, and that, though the moral element is strangely lacking in these myths, yet there is a striking resemblance between them and the Biblical story, where an answer to the same questions is given. 171 773

II. *The various human races.*

Have Bantus a clear idea of the human race? What they call *banhu* in Thonga, *bantu* in Zulu, evidently means "black people," the first inhabitants of the country. The Zulus are regarded, owing to their military ability, as a superior race, not however to such an extent as they themselves believe to be the case! Whatever may be their hostility or repugnance to their fellow blacks, they know that they belong to the same species. I am not sure that they hold this idea regarding White people, who are not *banhu* but *balungu*. 609 829

What is the origin of this word? As it is also used in Zulu (abelungo), the etymology suggested is the verb *ku lunga*, to be right, good. White people would then be correct, nice people, to

(1) Compare *Fol at Vie.* Oct. 1910. Les Origines. A. Jalla.

[1] [about the original cause of death. See p. 350, col. 116-Analyt]

609 the Native (1). However complimentary to us this explanation
829 may be, I very much doubt its accuracy. Firstly, Black people have not generally such a good opinion of us. They admit our superiority in intelligence, but unfortunately have not always found that White people behaved correctly in their dealings with them. Secondly, when we compare the word balungu with *Ñwalungu*, North, *balungwana*, inhabitants of Heaven, (see Chapter II), and with *Mulungu*, the great name for God in Central Africa, we are led to suppose that there may have been ancient mythological traditions, now forgotten, relating to White people, when they were not yet well known.

773 To account for the superiority of the White race, Mankhelu
829 assured me he had heard the following story many years ago, told by his grandfather in the village of Shiluvane, long before the arrival of the missionaries. When Ñwali created the first man, from whom both Whites and Blacks are descended, they were all naked. Gwambe slept with his sister, an act which had been forbidden, and she had a child. Since that time children are born ; but this was not the intention of Ñwali, who wished to create adult human beings only! The Gwambe (first ancestor) of the White people showed respect to his father, who was naked, whilst the Gwambe of the Blacks did not ; hence the deterioration (onhakala) of the Blacks. "We were fools and have been deprived of everything, and Ñwali said : You Blacks shall wear down your nails to the quick by digging the earth to find food!" As already pointed out, Mankhelu had not the slightest trace of the critical sense. This is evidently the Biblical story very curiously transformed. The idea of an original fault committed by the Black race in the beginning having resulted in the inferior position it now occupies, is, however, met with in many parts of Africa, and is probably autochthonous amongst the Thongas.

"Balungu ba hlulwa hi lifu ntsena" has become a kind of proverb, quoted by Natives when they see the marvels of

(1) Others say that their forefather named the White people *balungu* because they were clean (lunga having also that meaning). "They are always clean though they do not wash their bodies! They have no dirt." But these explanations are not quite satisfactory.

civilisation and means : "White people are only overcome by death." I once heard a little boy muttering it when I was playing the harmonium. 773 829

Their notions regarding the several European races are very crude. Once when I asked one of them if he knew whence the Whites came, he told me : "The Portuguese came from the sea, the Boers from the mountains." — "And we, missionaries, who are neither Portuguese nor Boers?" — "You come from Heaven," he answered with a charming smile! 609

Pikinini, who knew how to converse with the cock, once told me what the Bilen people think of the Whites. It was just after the deportation of Gungunyana :

— "Gungunyana is dead. The Portuguese have eaten him!"

— "How is that?"

— "Certainly! The Portuguese eat human flesh. Every one knows it. They have no legs ; they are fishes (tinhlampfi). They have a tail instead of legs. They live in water."

— "Then how do they manage to fight with you and to beat you if they are fishes and have no legs?"

— "Ho! Those who come to fight against us are the young men ; they have legs. They take us and put us all in a steamer which goes far away, far away. This steamer reaches a large rock which is surrounded by water on all sides. This is their country. We are taken out and placed on an island, whilst the soldiers go and fire shots to announce to the great White men-fishes that we have arrived. They choose one of us and make a little cut in his little finger to see if he is fat enough ; if not, he is put into a big basket full of ground-nuts which he must eat in order to become fat. When he is fat enough, they place him in a big, elongated pot of the size of a man, and red-hot. We know these particulars because a man, Ngomongomo, gave us the full explanation. He had been caught, but on the road his gods helped him ; he was covered with an eruption of pimples which was so disgusting that he was left in the island, and brought back here. He saw everything. We first refused to believe that. Now we know that it is the truth!"

Evidently Pikinini was in earnest and these absurd ideas were